

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

AI TANAKA

March 25, 2004

March 29, 2004

April 2, 2004

April 9, 2004

Sacramento, California

By

Joanne Iritani

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Florin JACL Oral History Project

Japanese American Citizens League, Florin Chapter

MISSION STATEMENT

To collect and preserve the historical record of the multigenerational experience of Japanese Americans and others who befriended them. The books produced will enhance the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection (CSUS/JAAC) housed in the CSUS Archives for study, research, teaching and exhibition. This unique collection of life histories provides a permanent resource for the use of American and international scholars, researchers and faculty, as well as a lesson for future generations to appreciate the process of protecting and preserving the United States Constitution and America's democratic principles.

PREFACE

The Florin JACL Oral History Project provides completed books and tapes of Oral Histories presented to the interviewed subjects, to the California State University, Sacramento/Japanese American Archival Collection (CSUS/JAAC), and to the Florin JACL Chapter. Copyright is held by the Florin JACL Chapter and California State University, Sacramento. Photocopying is limited to a maximum of 20 pages per volume.

This project will continue the mission of the Florin JACL Oral History Project which began in 1987 and recognized the necessity of interviewing Japanese Americans: "We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness." This same urgency to conduct interviews was felt by the North Central Valley JACL Chapters of French Camp, Lodi, Placer County, and Stockton in 1997-98 as a consortium joining the Florin Chapter in obtaining funding from the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CLPEF). And, again under the Florin Chapter banner, more life histories had been told with the generous funding from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP). This program is now being funded by the Florin JACL Oral History Project.

The Oral Histories in the Japanese American Archival Collection relate the personal stories of the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and internment of American citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry. There is a wide variety of interviews of former internees, military personnel, people who befriended the Japanese Americans, Caucasians who worked in the internment camps and others, whose stories will serve to inform the public of the fundamental injustice of the government's action in the detention of the Japanese aliens and "non-aliens" (the government's designation of U.S. citizens), so that the causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.

The population of those who lived through the World War II years is rapidly diminishing, and in a few years, will altogether vanish. Their stories must be preserved for the historians and researchers today and in the future.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER

The interviews of Ai Tanaka was conducted by Joanne Iritani, a Florin Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) member and present chair of the Oral History Committee. She is a former President of the Florin JACL, Education Chair, and a retired special education teacher with a master's degree from California State University, Bakersfield.

INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

The interviews were conducted in four sessions at the home of Ai Tanaka, Sacramento, CA on March 25, March 29, April 2 and April 9, 2004.

TRANSCRIBING AND EDITING

Transcribing and word processing by Joanne Iritani and editing by Cheryl Miles, granddaughter of Ai Tanaka who was video recording every session.

PHOTOGRAPHY

All photographs were supplied by Ai Tanaka and color copied by Joanne Iritani

TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 2000 State University Drive East, Sacramento, California 95819-6039.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Ai Higashi Tanaka was born in Loomis, California in 1918 to immigrants from Kumamoto Ken, Japan. Her sister, Midori was born in Loomis also. In 1921, the family went to Japan to be with their maternal grandmother who was ill. The parents were unable to return to the United States because the Oriental Exclusion Act was enacted in 1924 preventing the entrance of Japanese laborers.

Ai was educated in Japan, graduated from high school, and became a telephone operator. At age eighteen, she decided she wanted to see her home town of Loomis and her parents arranged for her to return to America. She promised her parents that she would return to Japan in three years, but she did not return until many years after World War II. She worked on a farm of her parents' friends. Also working on that farm was a twenty six year old Nisei. Ai returned to America in March, 1937 and was married to Mitsuo Tanaka in September, 1937. Ai and Mitsuo began married life on a leased forty acre farm near the American River, but the rains came and the forty acres of beans were lost in the flood. Ai related many instances of the creative work of her husband who worked at a variety of jobs and was a very good provider.

World War II began and Mitsuo took their two daughters to the Walerga Assembly Center while a very pregnant Ai remained in Sacramento. After giving birth to a baby boy, Ai was driven to the Walerga camp by a young Caucasian man. After a short time the family was moved to Tule Lake Relocation Center and later to Amache, Colorado Relocation Center. Mitsuo

went to Chicago to work and sent some chenille to Ai who made flowers for funerals. She also went to sewing school and learned to make patterns.

After the family returned to Sacramento, Ai took flower arrangement class from a teacher who came from San Francisco. She related her activities with the Ikebana International organization in Sacramento. She was a bon-odori [Japanese folk dancing] teacher at the Buddhist Church. Ai sewed kimonos for family members who also danced and she continues to sew by making futons [comforters]. She also enjoys having family members for dinner on Thursday nights.

Ai Tanaka is a poet writing in the Senryu style which is similar to Haiku but does not require a reference to the season. She has won many awards with her poems, and she continues to be creative with her flower arrangements, sewing, cooking and poetry.

[Session 1, March 25, 2004]

Present at this session are Ai Tanaka, the subject, Joanne Iritani the interviewer and Cheryl Miles, grandchild of Ai Tanaka who arranged this interview and was video taping the interview.

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

IRITANI: My name is Joanne Iritani and today's date is March 25, 2004. I am interviewing Ai Tanaka for the Florin JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] Oral History Project. I am now in her home here in Sacramento. And I would like you to tell us whatever you remember from the earliest time in your life or even let's start with your parents' lives, what you remember them telling you about their childhood, if they told you anything. And where they were from? Anything else like that that you remember. Okay. Go right ahead.

TANAKA: What you going to do after you get mine. You write it down.

IRITANI: I'm listening. I'm going to listen to this. So, go ahead and tell us what you remember that your parents told you.

TANAKA: Oh, well, they marry and they came to the America. And I think they stay at the country. I born in Loomis, so they come to Loomis.

IRITANI: Before we get to that, do you remember what your father told you about when he first came to America?

TANAKA: No, he never told me that.

IRITANI: But, you had said that he had come first to Hawaii.

TANAKA: Hawaii, and then come to the United States. And then they went home. He went home, I mean, to Japan and get married to my mother. Then come back to the United States, I think.

IRITANI: And they settled in Loomis at that time.

TANAKA: Yes, seemed like it.

IRITANI: And then you were born. What's your birthday?

TANAKA: My birthday is 1918. November 10.

IRITANI: November 10, okay, 1918. And do you remember anything about your childhood in Loomis?

TANAKA: No. I don't remember any. My parents told me that they had a fruit ranch. My father and mother. The boss operate. And I go to there and get some eggs. But, I don't remember. You know every morning I go to the boss's place and I get the eggs, take home for breakfast, I guess. But, I don't remember anything.

IRITANI: We did not name your mother and father. Will you give us your mother and father's names and where they were from.

TANAKA: My father's name is Masaki Higashi and my mother's maiden name is Kameo Koyama.

IRITANI: And they were from.?

TANAKA: Yes. Both.

IRITANI: Both from Kumamoto? And we are assuming that they must have come like in 1917, 1916, someplace around there. They were already married in Japan?

- TANAKA: Yes. Then come to the United States.
- IRITANI: He went back to Japan to marry her?
- TANAKA: Right.
- IRITANI: Because at that time, a lot of people were picture brides.
- TANAKA: Oh, no, no. My parents isn't picture bride.
- IRITANI: Okay. Good. We have to establish that, because at that time there were a lot of picture brides. All right. Then when you were how old you went to Japan? You were taken to Japan.
- TANAKA: I was three years old.
- IRITANI: And then what happened? And were there other sisters and brothers born already in Loomis?
- TANAKA: Yes. My sister [Midori]. I and my sister born here.
- IRITANI: And then when you went to Japan, you lived with your father's grandparents? Father's parents?
- TANAKA: My mother's parents, look like.
- IRITANI: Mother's parents.
- TANAKA: Mother's parents because reason why they went back to Japan is my grandmother, mother's mother, was ill. That's why we went to see my *obaachan*. Then, we stuck over there. They were going to come back to the United States, but 1924 I heard that the immigration [the Oriental Exclusion Act] changed. Nobody can come in.
- IRITANI: And that stopped your parents from coming back?
- TANAKA: Yes. Right.

IRITANI: And you were born over here, and your sister was born over here. And then you had other brothers and sisters?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. And then after that, Yuriko, my sister after Midori. And so we have altogether seven brothers and sisters. I'm the oldest, second Midori, and then third one Yuriko, and Kenichi, Ryuichi, and Seimo, and Chitose, the last one.

IRITANI: So, the others I think I know. Midori, and Yuriko, and Kenichi, and Ryuichi. . .

TANAKA: R-y-u-i-c-h-i.

IRITANI: R-y-u. Okay. Ai, Midori, Yuriko, Kenichi, Ryuichi, Seimo, Chitose.

TANAKA: Right. Seven altogether.

IRITANI: All right. And so, there you are in Japan and you started your grade school, your grammar school, *shogakko*?

TANAKA: Yes. I graduated junior high.

IRITANI: Well, you started from first grade. Do you remember what happened when you were a child in Japan? Things that you did?

TANAKA: M-m-m. Well, not too many things. I got sick. Usually got sickness. I think nowadays they call stomach flu. Some kind of. . . I was real, real sick when I was ten years old. And my parents take care of me real good. I supposed to be die, you know. All the time no medicine, my parents take care of me real, real good and I'm still alive.

IRITANI: You lived. Yes!

- TANAKA: So, I really proud of my parents. And they loved me.
- IRITANI: Yes. You were all living at your grandmother's place. Your mother's mother's place. And they had a farm in Kumamoto?
- TANAKA: They had a farm, yes. Look after the mother's place. Stayed there. They doing a farm. I was at the school over there for. . . just a grammar school. Then we moved to another town, Beppu. Hot spring town.
- IRITANI: Yes.
- TANAKA: I went to school over there. And I worked one year at the telephone company. I was a telephone operator.
- IRITANI: Oh, you were? About how old were you then?
- TANAKA: I was eighteen.
- IRITANI: You were eighteen. After you graduated from junior high.
- TANAKA: Then, my parents always talking about the United States, America. Good things, you know? America, this and that, this and that. Gee, so, I feel like I want to come and see my home town. So, I talked to my parents, "Gee, I want to go to my home town. Can I go?" Then they worry, you know? Oh, you know, I was nineteen. No, I started about seventeen or eighteen, then finally, they say, "Okay, you could go." Then I was so happy. I was working telephone company, I quit. And then I came to here to see my country. I promised my parents I'm going to come back three years. But, I didn't go back because I'm stuck here with my husband. [Chuckles]

IRITANI: So, did you get married right away? Did you meet your husband right away?

TANAKA: I guess so. [Laughter] And I came to my parents' friend's place. Okay, somebody has to. . .

IRITANI: In Loomis? Was it in Loomis?

TANAKA: Used to be called John Mark. [Located in area of what is now Fair Oaks Boulevard and Watt Avenue. John Mark was the landowner.] Supposed to be out of town Sacramento. You don't know John Mark? We call it John Mark. Used to be. Farm. Good friend. That's why they send me here. Otherwise I couldn't come. If they don't, nobody here. I couldn't come. [No family members lived here.] But, they have a good friend living here. That's why they say, "Okay." And then my husband was working there, you know, that farm. So, I met him and it seemed like he's a good man. Good boy. [Laughter] Then he was twenty six, I was nineteen. I think I marry that year I came here. It takes about two weeks to get here with a boat those days.

IRITANI: You don't remember which ship you came on?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. *Chichibu Maru*.

IRITANI: Chichibu, okay.

TANAKA: That was huge one. Takes two weeks to get to San Francisco from Yokohama.

IRITANI: Did you go to Angel Island?

TANAKA: Yes. Just overnight. They just check something. Just stay overnight. And they come up meet you. We took a train to

come to Sacramento. There's no highway or something. No bridge either.

IRITANI: No bridge, right.

TANAKA: I think one year finished the. . .

IRITANI: No, I think the bridge was later than that. You might have gone on the ferry boat to where the train was.

TANAKA: Yes. Train on the boat. Then come to Sacramento. Then that time, my husband and my parents' friend, Mr. Nakashima, come up, get on the train, come to Sacramento. Then I heard that M Street bridge that year they built. That was 1937. Long, long time ago.

IRITANI: Of course. After you came here, and you were married very soon after that?

TANAKA: September. I came here about, it takes two weeks and that was a March that year and then September I got married.

IRITANI: You got married. And that was in?

TANAKA: 1937, I think.

IRITANI: And then where did you live?

TANAKA: Same place over there. John Mark. They used to call John Mark.

IRITANI: Okay, I'll find out more about that.

TANAKA: In the country.

IRITANI: And your husband was working on a farm?

TANAKA: He was working on farm, but after we got married, he leased a ranch, and then we have beans, forty acre. That year rain, a lot

of rain and we have a flood, you know. Close by my place, American river or something. So, all the water come into my ranch. So, forty acres beans is all gone. First thing I came here and I got bad luck.

IRITANI: You know, I don't know if we said your husband's name.

TANAKA: Mitsuo. M-i-t-s-u-o.

IRITANI: Okay, Mitsuo.

TANAKA: Tanaka.

IRITANI: Tanaka. And where was he from in Japan?

TANAKA: He's Kumamoto.

IRITANI: Have you any idea about what year he came over?

TANAKA: No. I don't know anything about his story, because he born here.

IRITANI: Oh, he was born here!

TANAKA: He born here and the parents living here. Parents came from Japan and living here. And he's the oldest child. They had. . . husband, he's the first child, next Toshiye, and Tadao, and then I think they divorced. . . .

IRITANI: Oh, the parents did.

TANAKA: Anyway, they divorce and after that they had [inaudible].

IRITANI: But, he lived with his mother then? After that.

TANAKA: Yes, so, the father raised him.

IRITANI: The father raised him?

TANAKA: [inaudible] three children.

- IRITANI: Oh, that's different. So, here you are and what town was it close to, John Mark?
- TANAKA: What town, Sacramento.
- IRITANI: And was it south of Sacramento?
- TANAKA: I think so, south Sacramento.
- IRITANI: Near where Elk Grove is, or where?
- TANAKA: No. Long time ago. We used to pass by college. H Street.
- IRITANI: Oh, right here on. . .
- TANAKA: H Street. I didn't go there since I moved to Sacramento, so I don't go there.
- IRITANI: We'll have to see if somebody else knows where that is. Okay, so here you are now. And you're helping on the farm? Are you working on the farm, too?
- TANAKA: Oh, yes, yes. I wear a hat.
- IRITANI: Do you remember what kind of work you did?
- TANAKA: I weed. You know we had a beans field. Forty acre, you know? Beans and then I wear a hat.
- IRITANI: A bonnet.
- TANAKA: Wear a hat and cover with bandana and weeding, you know? I never do that in Japan, but. . .
- IRITANI: Of course.
- TANAKA: Yes. I was young so I didn't feel tired or anything, you know. I didn't know. Anyway, but it wasn't success. All the stormy weather damaged the forty acres beans. So, after that we had a hard time.

IRITANI: Did he have to do something else, or did he continue to farm.

TANAKA: No, we quit farm. So my husband work in my friend's place. I don't work. So moved to Sacramento after that.

IRITANI: Oh, you did. And then you had children. And I see you had three children. Judie, Carole and Rory.

TANAKA: Rory. R-o-r-y.

IRITANI: And they were born, well Judie and Carole were born before the War.

TANAKA: Three of them, before the war.

IRITANI: Three?

TANAKA: Number one, I think the war started already.

IRITANI: Yes. And before you went into camp.

TANAKA: M-hm.

IRITANI: Because you have April 16, 1942 and you probably went into camp in May? 1942? So, you had a little baby.

TANAKA: Yes. My husband took two daughters to the camp first. See, I was almost due, so I had to stay in Sacramento until I had baby.

IRITANI: And your husband took them to Tule Lake? To Walerga?

TANAKA: Walerga first.

IRITANI: To which one?

TANAKA: Walerga.

IRITANI: Walerga, and then to Tule Lake?

TANAKA: Tule Lake and then went over to Colorado. Amache.

IRITANI: Amache. So here you are by yourself ready to have a baby and you were left behind.

TANAKA: Yes, that's right. And then my brother-in-law asked American guy, nice guy, take me to the Walerga camp. I carrying a baby. I had a baby already. Stay here about one week or something. I carry the baby. He drove to Walerga. So nice. War started already. Such a nice guy. Those days I can't speak English. Not even one word. So, I don't say anything. I carry the baby and he drove to the Walerga camp. Really nice guy. I want to see him, but I forgot the name, everything.

IRITANI: See, this is another story. I've never heard one like yours.

TANAKA: I don't feel nothing those days, but now when I thinking about days, wow! Gee!

IRITANI: How did I do it, huh?

TANAKA: Yes. How did I do it? I had a due any day, and then the war started, you know? And then everybody goes to camp and I stay here. Separate, you know. My husband took Judie and Carole to the camp first. And after I went, *hakujin* [Caucasian] nice guy take me to the Walerga camp, so Judie and Carole was little, two and four. They run to me, "Mama!" They was so happy. Since then, we never separate. . . When moved to the Amache camp, my husband, a lot of people.

IRITANI: Before you get to Amache, let's stay in Walerga. How was that? I have been told some people's experiences were very bad at Walerga. What do you remember?

TANAKA: I was still young, so, let's see. I didn't even go to the mess hall because I have three children. Too much trouble to take them to

the mess hall. My husband work in the mess hall. So he bring me breakfast, lunch, dinner.

IRITANI: You still had to go to the bathroom.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. That was terrible, terrible. I have three children. I have to take them.

IRITANI: Do you remember what kind of work your husband did when he was in either Walerga or in Tule Lake?

TANAKA: Walerga, he was working in mess hall. The called it mess hall.

IRITANI: Not a dining room. But mess hall.

TANAKA: Mess hall. Not a dining room.

IRITANI: Did he also do that in Tule Lake when you were transferred there?

TANAKA: Yes. One thing good, we went to Amache camp after Tule Lake. We moved to Amache camp. Just because I choose Amache, oldest daughter, my Judie, every winter she got cold and she got fever and she had a tonsil. So, I talked to doctor, "You got any idea for, you know she always get sick was taking fever and so and so." And doctor suggested take the tonsil out." So, we did it. Since then, she never get sick. I thought a good thing, you know. But I took her to the doctor. I carried her and take her to the doctor. No taxi, no car. I had to carry her.

IRITANI: And you still had two other children.

TANAKA: Oh, yes, I had two children. One thing good is I don't have to worry about it. My neighbors all get to me close. And I had a good friend living in next barrack. End of the barrack. They take

care of my two kids when I take my oldest daughter to the doctor. Many time I carry her to the doctor. One day she had a pretty bad fever, she's throw up. She got pneumonia. So, a lot of people like that. you know? My husband work in the mess hall so he don't come home. He left morning and come home evening. So, I have to take care of my three children all by myself. Take care of the bathroom. But those days, I was young, so I don't feel tired or anything.

IRITANI: So, you didn't have any chance to take any kind of lessons or classes.

TANAKA: No, those days I didn't take anything, but after we went to Amache camp my husband was out. He went to Chicago. Men folks go out.

IRITANI: He had his work in Chicago.

TANAKA: He was working in Chicago and I think then, "I gotta do something," you know? I don't have to watch the kids closely because they are, youngest son is one, three, five. So, I want to do something. I like the flowers. So, those days, no fresh flower. So, I don't know how I find out. My husband sent me the chenille.

IRITANI: Chenille.

TANAKA: I make with the chenille. Flower.

IRITANI: Your own ideas? Oh-h. Very good.

TANAKA: Yes, own idea. I saw some [inaudible] and then some funeral, no flowers so I make the chenille flowers for the funeral. Then

they did the funeral with the flower. Yes. I still have a picture somewhere. I couldn't find it.

IRITANI: And so you were able to make your own flowers. And then did you take some flower arrangement lesson?

TANAKA: Not in the camp. Let's see Amache camp I went to sewing school. Good thing. Teacher was from Sacramento, Mrs. Kataoka. I still remember her face and everything. I and my good friend, both go to the sewing school. So, we learned the drafting. That's why good thing. I could make my own.

IRITANI: Drafting means that you know how to make patterns for everybody. Whatever size they are. Very good.

TANAKA: So, I like that. Sewing. That's why I like to sew. I like to make everything. I could figure it out.

IRITANI: And did you start taking some ikebana lessons?

TANAKA: Yes. After I come back to Sacramento, then I took flower arrangement. How many year. I don't remember.

IRITANI: Do you remember who your teacher was?

TANAKA: Yes, teacher was coming from San Francisco.

IRITANI: Oh-h. Which school?

TANAKA: Shinka-Do.

IRITANI: Shinka-Do.

TANAKA: Very graceful. Just the line. I like that simple one, you know? Now a days they put a lot of flowers and I don't like those.

IRITANI: That's free style. A little too mixed?

TANAKA: I like these. The line. [Indicating the arrangement behind her.]

IRITANI: That is beautiful.

TANAKA: Yes. I like the line.

IRITANI: And so you learned from her? And how long. . .

TANAKA: He. He.

IRITANI: He. What was his name?

TANAKA: Fujioka.

IRITANI: Fujioka. And he came from San Francisco once a week?

TANAKA: I think twice a month or something like that. Gee. It's a long time ago.

IRITANI: It's many years ago.

TANAKA: Yes. Many years ago. I was only forty. Before forty.

IRITANI: Did you take any other lessons like that, either in camp or after.

TANAKA: Sewing lesson, flower arranging and then we opened International Ikebana, you know?

IRITANI: Oh, are you one of the original members? [of Ikebana International.]

TANAKA: Yes. We opened it. Mrs. Summers is. . .

IRITANI: Marie Summers.

TANAKA: And then Molly Kimura is the Vice-President, and I don't know who's the, what they call. . .

IRITANI: Secretary?

TANAKA: Secretary. I don't know. Mrs. Sugiyama.

IRITANI: And she's still a member also.

TANAKA: Yes. Forty five year a member. I told the other day, I told you, huh? We opened the International Ikebana, you know? Forty

five, forty six years. And I had a forty year, I had a plaque. They had a dinner and they give me a plaque. So, I'm in it forty five years.

IRITANI: Very good.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

IRITANI: Okay, we will continue on Side B here, on Tape 1. We were talking about Ikebana International and how you were one of the people who you say opened it. One of the founders.

TANAKA: I was the Japanese secretary.

IRITANI: Oh, you were, of the organization?

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: There was a secretary in Japanese because there were so many of you who spoke Japanese?

TANAKA: Right, right. English secretary was, I don't know.

IRITANI: It's okay, even if you can't remember the name. That's okay. And you're still a member of Ikebana International. I'm so glad you're there still.

TANAKA: So, everybody know me, but I don't know them. Some of them, you know?

IRITANI: There are newer people like me on the board and in the membership, too. So you were talking about your sewing class, your drafting and all, what did you make when you were in Amache? Do you remember the things that you made? You took the lessons there.

- TANAKA: Yes. See, those day we don't have any sewing machine.
- IRITANI: That's right.
- TANAKA: So, I don't think that I make anything. After I come back to Sacramento that I make all kind of things. I draft myself and I make a jacket and all kind of things.
- IRITANI: Well, Cheryl was mentioning that you made some kimonos. Did you learn how to do that from somebody, or just from. . .
- TANAKA: Oh, kimono, I learn from when I was in Japan.
- IRITANI: Oh, you did? When you were still in school? or after. . .
- TANAKA: After school. I went to sewing school for a while. So, I know how to make. I don't know why but, I try everything.
- IRITANI: But at that time, when you were in Japan, were you usually wearing a kimono?
- TANAKA: Yes. I wearing a kimono. Yes. Most of time a kimono.
- IRITANI: Most of the time. I know when I went in 1954, it was after the war, and the women, especially out in the country didn't wear kimonos, they wore the. . .
- TANAKA: Oh, mompe?
- IRITANI: Uh-huh. Mompe. You didn't wear mompe?
- TANAKA: My time is the best time before war started. In Japan, in Korea, in China already war started. But not America. After I came here they. . .
- IRITANI: Right. Way after you came here. So, let's get back to your sewing. What other things do you make, or have you made sewing for yourself or for your family or what else do you make?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. Most of them my dress. My children's I don't make too much. I don't know why. Maybe easy to buy it. [Laughter]

IRITANI: Easy to buy it. Yes. And now, I was told that you're still doing some sewing.

TANAKA: Yes. I do.

IRITANI: What are you making now?

TANAKA: I'm making a comforter.

IRITANI: Is it actually a Japanese *futon*? Or more comforter? What goes inside?

TANAKA: Cotton.

IRITANI: It is cotton. Cotton batting.

TANAKA: It's in a roll. They have a singles, doubles, king-size. They already roll it.

IRITANI: Sized for a bed.

TANAKA: I put four layer in it. One layer is so thin. You know? So I put four of them in.

IRITANI: Oh-h my. Very warm.

TANAKA: Very warm and light and very expensive. [Laughter] Yes, just outside not expensive. But when Cheryl bought me the material, that's forty five dollar yard. Four yards, huh? I made a beautiful. I show you later. I made about a . . . My daughter living New York and she's ill. And she's in a hospital. And husband and her they like to give it away. So, they ask me to make my daughter's comforter. So, I made it. Double-sized bed comforter. Came out beautifully. Oh-h, it was so beautiful. I

don't know why I made it that beautiful. I can't believe myself. And then I sent to them right away. They like it. And then everybody comes into her room and saw her comforter. Oh, how beautiful. I want one. I want one. A lot of people say that, you know? So, my daughter and my son-in-law they like to give it away type. Inside so nice. Give it away, everything. So, most time, wedding gift, seem like they giving it away. That I made a comforter. It cost lots, you know? But they pay. pay material. I'm enjoying making that comforter and everything. I making Cheryl one. I'm making mine, too. I like to do those things. I don't want to just watch the TV all day, you know? I want to do something.

IRITANI: Good for you.

TANAKA: Flower arranging. When flowers dying I got to change, go outside, find the flowers or branches. The branches I told you already, next door's branch. So one day I call her, "Come over my place. I show you something." Then she came in. Okay? "This is your tree branch." She so happy. "You could come and pick my branches anytime you want." she said.

IRITANI: Yes. It's a lovely arrangement.

TANAKA: I want another one Over there. Next door's branch. I get branch next time. She said, "Any time."

IRITANI: You already have an idea of how to used it. You mentioned the flowers in your back yard?

TANAKA: Not too much.

- IRITANI: I was wondering, do you get out in the garden to work? You work in the garden, too.
- TANAKA: I don't work too much because gardener does everything for me.
- IRITANI: Good.
- TANAKA: I have a big yard. Nothing there. Sometime I look [inaudible] flower open. Winter time I can do nothing, but sometime I water. I don't have a sprinkler in the back. My son-in-law put the sprinkler in so I don't have to water the front.
- IRITANI: I was wondering also, do you attend a church?
- TANAKA: Well, lately, I don't go too much because I don't drive. And I have this problem. I go to Sacramento Buddhist Church when I was thirty five years old or something. I was in how many years?
- IRITANI: After you came back here from camp.
- TANAKA: The issei people nice to me, you know? The *obasan tachi* [informally 'aunties'] *Ai-chan*, *Ai-chan*. They called me *Ai-chan*. Two friends, whole life they call me *Ai-chan*. I like that. And then her husband still call me *Ai-chan*.
- IRITANI: *Chan* is a term of endearment. I really like you.
- TANAKA: Even my age they call me *Ai-chan*. I like that. I feel still they love me. My age, you know.
- IRITANI: Do you have a chance to go to Tanoshimi-kai at the Buddhist Church?
- TANAKA: I went to South Tanoshimi-kai for a long time. I don't know how long. Then one day they're going to fix the building, so

they moved to the Buddhist Church. And before I had a ride, but I don't have a ride any more. So, I didn't go to the Buddhist Church Tanoshimi-kai. Since then I quit and then after that I got busy, so I'm not going now. But, I had a good time. Yes, I have a lot of friends. Yes, when I go anywhere, everybody nice to me, so, I'm so happy for that.

IRITANI: You just cannot drive yourself.

TANAKA: That's what I am. I learn, trying to. . .

IRITANI: Did you try?

TANAKA: Too scare. My husband was teaching me. But one day I had a scare. Car coming from. . . big truck coming. I'm going this way. My husband say, "A-a-ah!" That's why I got scared.

CHERYL: She's also the *obon* teacher.

IRITANI: Did you learn to dance, Japanese dance in Japan?

TANAKA: Little bit. But not too much. And in the Buddhist Church, I was a *Bon odori* teacher.

IRITANI: Before the war?

TANAKA: No, after the war. After come back here. Twenty something years. Leader.

IRITANI: Did you learn some other obon dances other than where you were from in Kumamoto?

TANAKA: Oh, all kind of obon dance. Mrs. Tanabe teach us Bon odori. Her *Sensei* [Cheryl's teacher] teaches bon odori. Just a leader. Let's see how many years. Five, six, seven, eight. Twenty five years or twenty six years I was a bon odori.

- IRITANI: Teacher with other people? Very good. Do you still dance with the obon?
- TANAKA: No, no, no. I did three, four years ago, but that's it.
- IRITANI: That was the last time?
- TANAKA: Too old, you know? Get so tired.
- IRITANI: Too tired.
- TANAKA: So, they doing it now. My daughter and my granddaughters, three daughters.
- IRITANI: Three granddaughters.
- TANAKA: Take after me. My daughter, Cheryl, Joyce and Michelle. They're leaders. Florin Buddhist Church.
- IRITANI: At Florin Buddhist Church. I thought you were. . .
- TANAKA: I at Sacramento Buddhist Church.
- IRITANI: You did go to Sacramento Buddhist Church. But, they go over to the Florin Buddhist Church obon.
- TANAKA: Because her mother married a Florin people. That's why they teaching over there. Obon time. I enjoyed that twenty six years.
- IRITANI: Very good.
- TANAKA: I have a lot of picture when I dancing.
- IRITANI: We'll have to have one of those pictures, too, to put into the book.
- TANAKA: It's a long time ago.
- IRITANI: Well, that's all right.
- TANAKA: When I come home from bon odori practice, I have one plum tree. The plum makes good jam. So, my children like my plum

jam. So, after bon odori practice, almost nine o'clock in the night, come home, pick the plum. And then I and my husband make a plum jam. We did that for many years. Those days young so. . .

IRITANI: You could do it.

TANAKA: But, no more. Some time, I make it. I like to do that.

CHERYL: [Inaudible]

IRITANI: Cheryl was saying that you also made the *yukata*. [cotton kimono worn at the obon dances] Was that for everyone in the family?

TANAKA: Yukatas, yes for the bon odori. But, lately, I don't make any more, because too much.

IRITANI: Cheryl also said when I first came, that the family still gets together and you cook for them.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. Once a week. I like to do that. Every Thursday I invite.

IRITANI: The family.

TANAKA: Not all of them. Some of them can't come.

IRITANI: And so, what's your favorite things to make.

TANAKA: Cooking?

IRITANI: Uh-huh.

TANAKA: I don't know all kind of things. Every time different.

IRITANI: On *shogatsu*., new year's day. you have gathering here with the family?

- TANAKA: A long time ago I did that for thirty five years here. Those days not too many great grand kids. We don't have a great grand kids, just the grand kids.
- IRITANI: Just the grandchildren.
- TANAKA: So, I did it for thirty five years. And then lately, five years ago? Five, six years ago, they take over. My daughter. Now new year's is at Cheryl's place.
- IRITANI: Oh, good.
- TANAKA: Wow! Whole family. How many people come, Cheryl?
- CHERYL: Eighty people.
- IRITANI: Eighty!? Eighty people. Wow.
- TANAKA: I don't have to do anything. I don't have to cook anything. They cook sushi. [inaudible] They took over. So, that's one thing I'm very proud of them. They learned.
- IRITANI: They certainly have a good role model in you of doing things. They really do.
- TANAKA: Good thing they learned it. Still learning. Japanese cooking is no measurement. Everybody ask, "How many cup?" No such thing. Put so much in and pinch of salt, pinch of sugar. Hard, but can't help. No measurement.
- IRITANI: [Laughter] Oh, I have to measure. I have to use a cook book.
- TANAKA: Oh, I never measure.
- IRITANI: You're a real cook.
- TANAKA: Even grand kids ask me, "How many cup, grandma?" We don't measure. [inaudible] Just put salt and sugar in it, you know?

- IRITANI: And it comes out just right. Very good.
- TANAKA: When you make a noodle, you gotta make a soup. So, how many cups of shoyu in it? "I don't know."
- IRITANI: However it tastes.
- TANAKA: They like. So hard to teach young people Japanese cooking. American cooking.
- IRITANI: We have all the recipes for everything.
- TANAKA: This kind of thing, I have to measure [referring to the cream puffs she had made.] But, Japanese cooking, no. Not usually. So many. As long as it tastes good, okay. But sushi, it's a measurement.
- IRITANI: Your vinegar and sugar, what do you usually put in?
- TANAKA: One cup, one cup.
- IRITANI: One to one. Okay.
- TANAKA: But, salt. We call *meibunryo*. That means so much. One teaspoon or so salt. We don't measure.
- IRITANI: You don't measure even then.
- TANAKA: When you make a sushi, cook the rice. Even cooking rice, you can't cook soft, because you have to put the vinegar in it. So, you have to cook a little bit harder than usual. Then put the vinegar and sugar. Then cool off, then make the osushi. You can't make the osushi when it warm, because it rot. So, they make their own now, so I don't have to do any.
- IRITANI: Excepting, not for new year's but for your every week gathering. You have a meal for everybody.

TANAKA: I don't mind to do that. I want to try. Some people jealous of me.

IRITANI: It sounds like you're still going to be able to do it.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. I like to do it, no matter what other people say. It's not bad thing, so I don't want to be just sitting on the couch, watching TV all day.

IRITANI: You said that you have a satellite dish. Also you can get this station from New York. Is that one channel all Japanese programming?

TANAKA: Yes. All Japanese programming, all over the world. Whole world's news comes in. I have a dish antenna. I could take both English and Japanese.

IRITANI: So, you are enjoying that. And watch all the programs that you want to watch, or not watch.

TANAKA: I like to watch the cooking lesson. Lot of cooking lesson. Cook book we got that Kinokuniya [name of book store] San Francisco. Kinokuniya, they have a recipe. So, if I like it, some cooking showing, I could get that recipe from Kinokuniya. [inaudible]

IRITANI: So, you're keeping up with the newer type of cooking in Japan as well as other kinds of stories on the dish? Do you like the drama stories, history stories? Not so much those things.

TANAKA: No. I like the story, old timers. Samurai. Not all of them. Some of them. Japanese story. I like the. . . . I don't know.

IRITANI: Anyway, you're enjoying your life right now. Just wish you didn't have that pain in your side.

TANAKA: Only one that I have problem. I went to doctor, everything okay, except this.

IRITANI: Except that pain.

TANAKA: Yesterday was all day bothers me when I sit in the car, still bothers me. Still have pain, you know?

IRITANI: And you were saying that you play cards every week?

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: Still?

TANAKA: Yes. Once a week.

IRITANI: How many people come over?

TANAKA: Five. Altogether five.

IRITANI: Five of you play. And it's a poker.

TANAKA: Playing cards.

IRITANI: Yes. You're playing cards and you're just enjoying yourselves. The others are also older?

TANAKA: Most about same age. This is almost fifty years. Enjoying [inaudible]. Fifty years. One guy passed away so, [inaudible]. You gotta have five people. You could play six people, but. . . .

IRITANI: You need at least five people. Nothing wrong with what you've said so far. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about that you have done in the past, or that has happened in the past?

CHERYL: [inaudible]

IRITANI: Yes, when did you learn to speak English? How?

TANAKA: Well, when I come here, my children still going to grammar school, I have to learn English. So, I went to night school and

day school. I don't know how long, but anyway, I took the bus and go to the. . . . I still have a note.

IRITANI: Do you remember where that school was that you went to?

TANAKA: It was the J Street or something. At the education. I took a bus and go over there.

IRITANI: And you went every week?

TANAKA: Something like that, yes.

IRITANI: And you're doing very well with your English. Yes, I can understand it. It can be broken. It's okay to be broken. But it could be understood. That's the main thing about language.

TANAKA: I'm trying to learn but, you know.

IRITANI: You're doing fine. When you were in Japan, as you were growing up, as a child, you always knew that you were an American, you were born over here? No? Because that was the reason you were able to come over here, wasn't it? Because you were born over here?

TANAKA: But, I didn't think that way. Grammar school I went Kumamoto and all the way. I didn't thinking about that. And then, when I grown up, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, "Gee, it seemed like." My parents always talking about America's a nice thing. "Gee, I want to see my home country." So, when I grown up, then my father said, you know in Japan father is the boss. Mother can't say anything. You know. So, I think mother cried when I left there. My father told me, "Well, if you want to go, go ahead." Then, I was so happy. "Oh, I could see my home town." So, I'm

getting ready. I make a dress myself. No pattern. I made a dress.
That's why I got to wear a dress.

IRITANI: Oh, you made an American dress? A western dress. Oh, my.

TANAKA: Then, I got the coat and I was nineteen when I left. I was
nineteen April 30. The flowers out. You know, cherry
blossoms. I never forget the cherry blossoms blooming so
beautifully and in those days, the tape. . .

IRITANI: Oh, that they throw.

TANAKA: Everybody go away, lotta tapes I carry. All my telephone
operators and my friends and my relatives. Give me a lot of
tapes holding, *neh*? Then goodbye.

IRITANI: Where did you sail from?

TANAKA: First from Beppu, that's Kyushu, hot spring town. And to the
Kobe, my father take me to Kobe. Then stop I think Yokohama.

IRITANI: Did he go to Yokohama, too? Oh, so he went to Yokohama to
see you off. So, you actually sailed from Yokohama.

TANAKA: Yes. Takes two weeks. That time I was nineteen.

IRITANI: You were very brave. This is what a lot of the people who came
across were. They were very brave to come.

TANAKA: Not even somebody, nobody waiting for me. They were my
parents' friends.

IRITANI: That's right. And you didn't know them.

TANAKA: I didn't even see them before.

IRITANI: Even if you did, you wouldn't remember because you were only
three years old when you left.

TANAKA: I don't remember nothing. My parents told me you did this and that, but I don't remember anything. I just want to see the home town. That's all I came. That was it.

IRITANI: Do you think you have more you want to share with us, or shall we just close it here?

TANAKA: Yes, okay, today.

IRITANI: Today. This is enough? Okay.

TANAKA: My English is terrible.

IRITANI: No, your English is just fine. I'll be able to translate [transcribe]. You're doing fine. Now, I'm going to close the interview at this point. All right? And if you still think of something more, we'll have another session. Okay?

TANAKA: Okay.

IRITANI: All right. Thank you very much. No, you were very special. You were. Ah, very good. Thank you very, very much.

[End of session 1]

[Session 2, March 29, 2004]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

IRITANI: This is Joanne Iritani with Session 2 with Ai Tanaka in her home. Today's date is March 30, 2004. I listened to the first hour of the interview with Ai Tanaka and I found I had some questions. I must have clarified some details of your life and your families' life. So, I'm going to start back with your father. You said that he came first to Hawaii.

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: Did he ever talk about what kind of work he did in Hawaii?

TANAKA: No. He never talk about what kind of work he does. He did.

IRITANI: When he first went to Hawaii, and then he came over here. He never said how long he stayed in Hawaii before he came here.

TANAKA: No. He never made that. I just know he come to the Hawaii first, then after that he come to United States. That's all I know.

IRITANI: That's okay. And did he ever say, well Cheryl mentioned this morning to me that when he was in the Loomis area, he was clearing land by dynamiting tree stumps.

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: Was there anything more about that that he told you about?

TANAKA: You know, he trying to tear down the tree, big tree. And he put the dynamite in roots, I think. Near roots. Okay? and then he

put the light on and he's supposed to get away fast, but too slow, I guess, huh? So the tree fell on my father. That's why he got hurt. People think he not going to make it.

IRITANI: His arm was injured.

TANAKA: Yes. His arm, his shoulder. No wonder he was complain about the shoulder ache. And neck ache. And his arm, you could see the almost bone. No meat here. And then was looking his arm, oh my goodness, I wonder what he did. Young days. Then he told me. He put the match on the dynamite. He's supposed to get away fast.

IRITANI: He didn't quite make it. Tree fell on him. I'm going to stop for a minute.

[Interruption]

IRITANI: Okay, we shall continue about your father. Before we have him dying, when he went to Japan, you with your mother and father [and sister] went to Japan, and that must have been in 1920? 1921? You were three. 1921

TANAKA: Yes. I was [born in] 1918. My sister two year younger than me. So, 1920. '21 go back to Japan.

IRITANI: You went to Kumamoto Ken where your mother was not well.

TANAKA: My grandma.

IRITANI: Your mother's mother was not well.

TANAKA: She was ill. That's why we all go back to see her. Then we stuck.

IRITANI: Then you stayed because of the 1924 law that said you could not, they could not come back.

TANAKA: Right. Anybody can't come in to the United States.

IRITANI: The Exclusion Act. 1924. Tell me what you know about what your father did in Japan. You mentioned your grandmother had a farm first? And then your father worked on that farm? And then you moved to Beppu. About how old were you when you went to Beppu?

TANAKA: After I graduate grammar school. Then we moved to the Beppu.

IRITANI: So, most of your grammar school was in the Kumamoto farm rather than at Beppu. Can you tell us about your childhood in the grammar school. Do you remember some of the things that you did and some of the classes that you really liked?

TANAKA: I remember one thing. My sixth grade teacher was very young he served the army and he come back so strict. And everybody kind of *osoroshii*, you know?

IRITANI: Afraid of him.

TANAKA: Afraid of him. Like, he's a teacher, but seemed like he was very strict anyway. Anyway, he's very nice. So, I think we got very good teacher. But, some people didn't like him.

IRITANI: Because he was so strict.

TANAKA: But, I liked my teacher. I was only fourteen.

IRITANI: But, you probably followed all the rules.

TANAKA: Oh, yes, yes. Sometimes, we stayed after the school, stay in school ground. We playing. Then teacher says, "Everybody come." He got mad at us. So, I'm always *shojiki*. [Honest] I go to the *sensei* [teacher] "*Neh, sensei.*" But some of them ran

away. That's why he got more mad. So we had to stay how many hours.

IRITANI: After school.

TANAKA: After school, yes. But he didn't get mad at me because I go to the sensei.

IRITANI: Because you came. You followed the direction.

TANAKA: That's one thing I remember. Oh yes. I had a anemic, I think. Every morning we have to what do you call, before school start.

IRITANI: Exercise.

TANAKA: No, not exercise, we play something. I think I was anemic. I blackout.

IRITANI: Oh you fainted? Blackout.

TANAKA: Twice.

IRITANI: Oh, my.

TANAKA: But maybe those days, I think, I don't know. I didn't eat too much, or I don't know.

IRITANI: Yes, who knows.

TANAKA: Long time ago.

IRITANI: But, you do know that that's what happened to you.

TANAKA: They have a race every year. I always say I'm *kachiki* [spirited, unyielding]. You know what *kachiki* means? I don't want to lose.

IRITANI: You're determined to win.

TANAKA: That's me, people say. I think so, too, because I try everything hard. I don't think I'm good, but I try hard, anyway. One day we

have a race, tie the fish on the pole. I tie so hard. Some people just one time and then run. Mine doesn't come off. If came off, then you won't get the prize. But I was going to third place, but I was first. Just because people's fish fell off. So, I win. [inaudible]

IRITANI: Very good.

TANAKA: I don't know, very good or not.

IRITANI: That's a thinking child. Not just trying to hurry through something, but making sure. Very good. Determined. And then you mentioned that you graduated from sixth grade. And then the family moved to Beppu.

TANAKA: I went to school over there.

IRITANI: You went to junior high. *Chugakko*.

TANAKA: *Chugakko*.

IRITANI: And in Beppu, your father did what?

TANAKA: He had a fish pond. Koi and goldfish and eel and those kind of things. That's his business.

IRITANI: He didn't have a business when he lived in Kumamoto?

TANAKA: Doing the farm. Take over the. . .

IRITANI: Did somebody else take over that when he went to Beppu?

TANAKA: I think my father sell to other people. House and land, everything. Then, we move to Beppu.

IRITANI: And he was a business man. And that's where you also, in Beppu, you started to take sewing class? Or did you take it before that?

TANAKA: Yes. After I graduate school, then I went to a sewing school for a while, and then after that I worked one year for a telephone operator.

IRITANI: Just one year. Did you ever take odori?

TANAKA: I don't think so.

IRITANI: That's only something you did after you came here as an adult. Not as a child. You didn't learn any dancing?

TANAKA: I don't think I take any lesson. I was working in a telephone company for one year, and then I was come here when I was sixteen or seventeen, you know.

IRITANI: Seventeen, you said.

TANAKA: But, too young so my parents don't want me to come]. That's why, grown up, then I started I want to go to my home town.

IRITANI: Well, before you come here, I want to go back to your traveling on the ship. You didn't travel all around Japan while you were living in Beppu. Beppu was part of Kumamoto Ken, too?

TANAKA: No, no, no. Different ken [prefecture]. Oita Ken.

IRITANI: Oita.

TANAKA: Kumamoto Ken's here and next ken's Oita, and the Kagoshima. Kyushu is supposed to be nine. Kagoshima. . .

IRITANI: But the main ones are Kagoshima. . .

TANAKA: Kyushu Island. One of the Kyushu, I think. Eight ken.

IRITANI: Kagoshima, and Kumamoto, and Oita are the main ones?

TANAKA: Fukuoka.

IRITANI: Fukuoka, yes.

TANAKA: Saga Ken.

IRITANI: Oh, Saga is.

TANAKA: Saga is part of Kyushu, too. Nine.

IRITANI: Before you left over there, before you left your area in Beppu and you were able to travel on the ship, what did you have to do in order to come over here? Do you remember who you had to talk to, what kind of papers you had to get?

TANAKA: Gee, I don't remember. Why my parents were living here in the United States, that's why I came to the United States.

IRITANI: But, when you were in Japan and you were making, or your parents were making arrangements for you to come over here.

TANAKA: Supposed to, huh? I don't remember those things.

IRITANI: You don't remember those details.

TANAKA: I think he wrote to his friend living in the United States, "My daughter wants to come to the United States. Will you take care of my daughter?"

IRITANI: But, there had to be some arrangement made in Japan for you to leave.

TANAKA: No, I don't remember anything. Nothing that difficult, you know. I was a nisei. I born here.

IRITANI: Did you have your. . . did you have to get a passport or something from the American Consul or something?

TANAKA: Yes. So friend sent out my birth certificate.

IRITANI: Okay. That's why. Okay.

TANAKA: I don't have to do nothing.

- IRITANI: And that was the proof that you are an American citizen.
- TANAKA: I born so and so in Loomis, California. [Inaudible] friend send us birth certificate. That's the one that works everything. I don't think my father does anything.
- IRITANI: Except to get the ship for you to go on. You don't remember what you did on the ship, what level you were on?
- TANAKA: I think bottom.
- IRITANI: You were at the bottom?
- TANAKA: Window from the water. I think we were in the bottom.
- IRITANI: Did you have a room by yourself? Or with somebody?
- TANAKA: We have seven people.
- IRITANI: Seven people in the room. And you didn't know any of them when you left?
- TANAKA: For a while I was remember, but now I don't. . .
- IRITANI: But, they were not people from your area. Other people from all over Japan, I guess.
- TANAKA: Yes, all over Japan, and I think most of the people goes to the Los Angeles. That's what I think, you know. I think one going, seems like Sacramento. Yes, come to the Sacramento. But I was so young, so I don't remember. But ship was real nice, I had a good time.
- IRITANI: You did not get seasick?
- TANAKA: Oh, yes. I get seasick for two weeks. Two weeks to come here. Two weeks I was sick. The roommate, I mean, same room guy bring food for me three times. But, I couldn't eat. We take a

bath, nice bathroom, we take a bath every night. I was shaving.
Eyebrows, you know.

IRITANI: Yes, eyebrows.

TANAKA: And then I shave it off, because boat.

IRITANI: [inaudible] tipped. [Laughter]

TANAKA: I remember that. Then we stopped at Hawaii for a few hours.
So, we see the Hawaii.

IRITANI: A little bit.

TANAKA: A little bit. *Chotto matte ne?* [Wait just a little while.]

[At this point, Mrs. Tanaka's pain in her side became more intense and we decided to end the interview for the day.]

[End of Session 2]

[Session 3, April 2, 2004]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

IRITANI: This is Joanne Iritani and this is Session 3. I am with Ai Tanaka in her home. Today's date is April 2, 2004. We had to cut short her previous Session 2 because of her pain in her side. She feels fine now, and so she called to ask if I would continue with this session. Here we are with Session 3, and sometimes, it's okay to repeat what you already said. It's okay. We will begin with you being on that ship and you said you were sick for two weeks. Did you ever go up on the deck?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. I went to dinner one, two times in the dining room. And one day I went to the deck all by myself. I wanted to know how the outside. And then when I'm standing there, gee, wind blows. All by myself. Nobody there, I thought, "Wow, I'm gonna blow in the ocean." I got so scared and I come into the ship. I'm never forget that.

IRITANI: I'm going to check the volume right now before we go on.

[Interruption]

All right, we'll continue with the volume put up a little higher. And anything else on shipboard on the Chichibu Maru that you remember?

TANAKA: Did I tell you, I shaving eyebrow. I think ship moved.

IRITANI: Ship moved. Half of the eyebrow. So, you have to always, every day repair that. And then you got in to San Francisco Bay and you said you saw the Golden Gate Bridge.

TANAKA: Yes, but we can't go to there.

IRITANI: You went under there in order to get into the bay. And from what I read, the Golden Gate Bridge was finished in 1937. So, you went under the bridge when it was relatively new. Very new. And then you went to Angel Island?

TANAKA: Overnight.

IRITANI: Were there a lot of women there?

TANAKA: Yes. Almost about ten people.

IRITANI: Came from your ship? They were women?

TANAKA: Not all women. Women and men. Those days, boys. Most of the people young, eighteen or twenty or something like that.

IRITANI: Were they all Japanese?

TANAKA: Yes. I didn't see anybody but Japanese from the boat. About ten people. Just overnight and they checked everything. Everything was okay.

IRITANI: Physical, they gave you a physical checkup, medical checkup. Everything was fine.

TANAKA: Yes. Everything was fine. I wasn't scared at all, you know? I don't know why.

IRITANI: You were a very determined person to come over here.

TANAKA: Yes. I can't believe myself. Even now. Somehow, I did it.

- IRITANI: And then did a boat or something take you over to San Francisco pier. Or did some people come over to meet you? You have to go over to the pier, I guess to meet your parents' friends.
- TANAKA: No, I think the small boat come out. I don't know, they send a boat or we just go over there. I don't know for sure. About ten people in the boat, small boat from Angel Island.
- IRITANI: After you got off of Angel Island, your parents' friends met you. How many people met you then?
- TANAKA: My parents' friend, Mr. Nakashima and my husband. [Chuckles] I mean one boy, Tanaka.
- IRITANI: A young man.
- TANAKA: Those two.
- IRITANI: That's all.
- TANAKA: Come after me. That time we don't have anything, just the boy with Mr. Nakashima.
- IRITANI: And then you said you took the train, and the ferry boat. The train went on the ferry boat.
- TANAKA: That was something interesting, because Japan never had that kind of thing. Under the water, they have a train, in Japan. But now, over here, first time.
- IRITANI: First time you saw that. You got on that. And then you came over here. Did you go directly up to Loomis? Or where did you?
- TANAKA: My parents' friend living in we call it John Mark.
- IRITANI: Oh it was in John Mark.

TANAKA: Still there.

IRITANI: I asked about that. I asked a person who lived in the area before the war. And he says, "Oh yes, they call it John Mark. And the person who owned the land was John Mark. And it's around Watt Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard. So I know where it is. I found out.

TANAKA: It's not too far from here.

IRITANI: So, you went there and you stayed with Mr. Nakashima's family and at that time, did you also begin working on their farm, too?

TANAKA: I was helping them, because I'm not a guest. I'm a no place to go so my parents sent to. Somebody has to take care of me, I'm only nineteen. So, I was working on the farm.

IRITANI: And what kind of work were you doing at that time?

TANAKA: I dig the *gobo* [burdock roots, a 3-4 feet long root vegetable]. I was young, so I don't even know how to use the shovel. I was watching other people, then dig the ground. *Gobo* is so long, you know. I have to dig deep, then pull out. Those kind of things I did.

IRITANI: And that *gobo* was sent to the market and sold?

TANAKA: That time we did. To Sacramento to one of the store, grocery store. So, Mrs. Nakashima driving those days. So, I sitting next to Mrs. Nakashima and coming in front of the store. That was a side business. They had a big, they rented the, leased the land and they make all kinds of things. I think they have a rice, too.

IRITANI: Rice?

TANAKA: Rice field.

IRITANI: A variety was grown there. And then of course, you've already met the man that you were going to marry.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. Before I come, seem like my parents and Mr. Nakashima talk about me when I come here.

IRITANI: Oh-h-h.

TANAKA: Just like a fixed marriage, huh? If you don't like it, then you don't have to get marry him, my father told me. I'm a young girl, so of course, my parents worry about me after I come here. So, he told me everything, and he talk about a guy Mr. Nakashima know. He was working Mr. Nakashima's place. Their parents are friends. Old friends. My parents, Nakashima and my husband's parents, all friends.

IRITANI: So, your parents already knew his parents.

TANAKA: Oh, yes, yes. So, if you don't like him, you don't have to get married, but, we talk about you and Mr. Nakashima and me. So, he explain to me. So, I liked him, that's why I got married, I guess.

IRITANI: So, it was really an arranged marriage for you.

TANAKA: Something like that. But, that's no really a fixed marriage.

IRITANI: No, but the parents had already talked together, and so, it was up to you to accept him. To say, "Yes." So, it was okay. And at that time he was working on the farm so you got to know him better. And where were his parents?

- TANAKA: His parents were passed away. No, wait a minute. Father was passed away already. And he had one brother and one sister. That's all I know. Later on, I find out he got more step sister and brother. One by one coming out. My husband was. . .
- IRITANI: He wasn't talkative.
- TANAKA: No, he doesn't. *Kuchi ga omoi yuun desu ka?*
- IRITANI: Kuchi and omoi? Oh, I've never heard that.
- TANAKA: *Kuchi ga omoi.*
- IRITANI: The mouth is heavy?
- TANAKA: He don't talk too much. We call, *kuchi ga omoi.*
- IRITANI: Okay. So, when you came, what month was it?
- TANAKA: April.
- IRITANI: You left in April and you came and when were you married?
- TANAKA: Married September.
- IRITANI: In September of 1937. And then you lived right there at the same farm.
- TANAKA: Yes. Same farm. They have a house, you know country, look like a barn, huh? We moved over there. Working in the field. Nakashima's.
- IRITANI: In the field as well. And that was 1937. And then Judie was born a year or so later.
- TANAKA: Next year. In June. It seemed like right away I got pregnant, huh? [Laughter]
- IRITANI: That's okay. You're married.

TANAKA: You know, tomorrow is April third. I left Japan April third.
Beppu. And a lot of people come to see me leaving.

IRITANI: Throw the tape.

TANAKA: Throw the tape. Wow, hundreds of them, I hold them. Lot of
friends. Seemed like I was on a movie or something. Movie
star or something. I feel like that. I didn't even cry. But,
afterwards I was thinking, "Gee, how was mama's feeling?"

IRITANI: Mama was feeling very sad to see you go, I'm sure. And now
here you are a mama over here. After you were at John Mark,
you decided to get another place or live someplace else or did
you stay until the war time?

TANAKA: We leased forty acres and then planted beans.

IRITANI: That was separate from the Nakashima's.

TANAKA: Yes. Separate from Nakashima. That year was a bad luck for us.

IRITANI: That was the first year that he farmed by himself?

TANAKA: Right.

IRITANI: Oh, that was hard.

TANAKA: Really hard. Afterwards we had a hard time, but we were young.
So, now, I'm thinking, "Gee, I went through, we both went
through." And besides I was pregnant, and all the crop is gone.
Forty acres beans. Soy beans, I think.

IRITANI: Oh, soy beans. Okay.

TANAKA: My husband was looking for somebody to, what do you call,
machine, to cut them. That's harvest? Something.

IRITANI: To harvest it.

TANAKA: Harvest the beans. And the. . .

IRITANI: The rains came.

TANAKA: That year in Sacramento, I have a picture someplace. . .

IRITANI: We'll get it later.

TANAKA: All trees are fall. And some house broken. It was a terrible year.
That's my luck. Bad luck year.

IRITANI: Was that after Judie was born?

TANAKA: Before.

IRITANI: Oh, before Judie was born, too. You were still pregnant.

TANAKA: I didn't even know if I have pregnant.

IRITANI: You didn't even know that?

TANAKA: I didn't know that.

IRITANI: Talking about your pregnancy, did you have a midwife take care
of you?

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: And where did you give birth?

TANAKA: The midwife name was Mrs. Saruwatari.

IRITANI: Saruwatari. Okay.

TANAKA: That's fourth and. . .

IRITANI: Oh, you went over there? Did you go to her place to have the
baby then? Because a lot of people tell be about how they had
their babies at home with the midwife.

TANAKA: Oh, no, I went to her home. The midwife's home. My husband
take me there. Just because when I come here, first thing I know
her. I don't know why, but Mrs. Nakashima, Mr. and Mrs.

Nakashima, and Mr. and Mrs. ah-ah. Gee, I forgot a lot of things.

IRITANI: It's okay.

TANAKA: And a lot of people know me. But, I don't know them.

IRITANI: Of course. They knew your parents before they went to Japan.

TANAKA: They're all friends, you know? Japanese so small groups, they all friends, used to be seemed like. So, I know Mrs. Shimada. She's a midwife. So my husband take me over there and I had Judie.

IRITANI: Oh, Mrs. Shimada. You mentioned Saruwatari.

TANAKA: Those days, Saruwatari. Second marriage was Shimada.

IRITANI: Oh, I see. So, it's the same person.

TANAKA: Same person. Yes. The name is a different. Second marriage.

IRITANI: So, when you had Judie, was she Mrs. Saruwatari?

TANAKA: Midwife.

IRITANI: Then at what point did your husband start to lease some other land?

TANAKA: No. We didn't come back there any more. He was working some place. Truck driving or something.

IRITANI: He had to find some other work to provide for his family.

TANAKA: Had to find a job. Especially those days. So *fukeiki*. *Fukeiki* means . . .

IRITANI: It was depression time.

TANAKA: Yes, yes. Right.

IRITANI: *Fukeiki*.

- TANAKA: I was young, I didn't even feel bad or anything.
- IRITANI: He was the provider. He will take care of you. Yes. And so, you had Judie and at what point did you move to. . . you didn't move again until wartime?
- TANAKA: When my husband was working in the country, Woodland. We call Woodland. You know Sakata's farm?
- IRITANI: No, I don't.
- TANAKA: He's a very, very successful man. We moved to that area.
- IRITANI: Down in Courtland? Down on the river?
- TANAKA: Woodland or Courtland.
- IRITANI: Anyway, someplace else. Your husband worked there.
- TANAKA: And so, I go with him.
- IRITANI: Yes.
- TANAKA: Because I don't want to stay all by myself, rented the house in Sacramento. Especial I'm pregnant, so I go with him. And then their family was real nice. Japanese family. He owned the ranch, aspara ranch.
- IRITANI: Asparagus.
- TANAKA: Asparagus. So, my husband works there. He know how to operate the machine. Tractor. Tractor drive. So, I don't do nothing because I just stay there. Stay home. So sometime help in Mrs. Koyasako. Nice lady
- IRITANI: Koyasako.

TANAKA: She passed away long time ago. I know their family. Big family, eight children or something she have. Mr. Miyaoka, he had aspara ranch.

IRITANI: In that area? And then when was your second child born?

TANAKA: Second child born, hm-m.

IRITANI: Two years after Judie was born?

TANAKA: After Judie born then we moved to Sacramento, again. Rent the house and was staying M Street. Now Broadway.

IRITANI: N Street?

TANAKA: M. M.

IRITANI: Capitol Avenue.

TANAKA: Capitol Avenue. We rented the house over there, and then Carole born.

IRITANI: Was she also born at the home of the midwife?

TANAKA: Yes. Same place.

IRITANI: And your husband was still working in the fields.

TANAKA: I think he was working. . . long time ago Japanese movie. He's from Los Angeles. He's a reverend. His business reverend, but he's showing Japanese movie. My husband is a very, what do they call them. He's very smart, he knows how to use the machine. Mechanic thing, huh? He learned all by himself. He didn't even go to school. So, he worked for him. So he's gotta go town to town and that time I told you we staying at M Street. And then I had Carole, the same midwife.

- IRITANI: You know, I remember when I was a child in Bakersfield, and we used to have a man come around showing movies. I remember we called him Ban-san.
- TANAKA: Ban-san, yes.
- IRITANI: Was he the same one?
- TANAKA: Ban-san, yes. Ban-san, he's a reverend. Side business was. . .
- IRITANI: Show the movies.
- TANAKA: Yes, show the Japanese movie. So, my husband was, you know.
- IRITANI: Right, the operator of the projector. Very good.
- TANAKA: My husband, first he was working Namiemo. Do you remember? Namiemo, we call. He working him first. Ban-san, maybe son was operating. Got mixed up.
- IRITANI: That's okay. Anyway, that was your husband's work at that time. Was that now almost wartime? By then. Carole was born in 1940. And war began in 1941, December of 1941.
- TANAKA: 1941, December war started? My son. . .
- IRITANI: He was born after the war started.
- TANAKA: Couple of months later. It's gotta be 1942.
- IRITANI: Yes. By the time he was born. So, your husband didn't do any farming after that.
- TANAKA: No, no, no. We can't go back to farm any more. He was working operator.
- IRITANI: At all. Even to work for somebody else. He didn't work for anybody else. And he did this, worked with the movie work until it was wartime then?

- TANAKA: No, after that, we rented the house at the Fifth Street, broken down house. I saw it over there. Used to be here I told somebody, my children or granddaughter or somebody.
- IRITANI: Fifth Street, downtown.
- TANAKA: Fifth and T, I think.
- IRITANI: Fifth and T, okay.
- TANAKA: That time he was working movie theater.
- IRITANI: In a regular movie theater?
- TANAKA: Yes. Movie theater.
- IRITANI: Operator of the machine, the projector? Not just the Japanese movie now.
- TANAKA: No, those days, theater. *Hakujin* movie. [Caucasian theater] He's a very good for machine. Machine specially. Good thing, because those days only wages was a hundred dollar a month, or something like that. But everything so cheap, so.
- IRITANI: Everything else was also cheap. You know, we didn't mention exactly where he was born. Do you know?
- TANAKA: My husband? He was born Los Angeles.
- IRITANI: Los Angeles. And then the family moved up here.
- TANAKA: I heard from my husband, okay? When they lived in Los Angeles, that time already father was separated. And then father was sick. He was only fifty and heart problem, so my husband only about eighteen or something, he taking care of the father and he passed away, he's fifty or fifty one. So, my husband and his brother and his sister, those three having a hard time. See,

no parent. So, I think then, I don't know how he come to Sacramento. I don't know his story too much, he didn't say too much.

IRITANI: He didn't talk very much.

TANAKA: I heard from other people his life. After I got married. Too late to do anything, good or bad.

IRITANI: He was a good person.

TANAKA: Yes, he was a good person. He was so happy when he see the grandkids and my children, this and that. "Look, just because you come from Japan, look at that," he said. He was so happy to see the picture. She was one big family, because my mother and father sent them. [His] Father didn't get remarried, but mother.

IRITANI: Mother did. So, it sounds like up until the wartime, he was a good provider. He really knew how to find work and, even if you were moving from place to place, that's okay. He always had something else to provide for you. Very good.

TANAKA: So, we never starve.

IRITANI: Yes, you never starved.

TANAKA: He really [inaudible]. He could do the fixing radio, those days small radio, huh?

IRITANI: Right.

TANAKA: Yes, he fixing a radio. Side business, you know? He works hard for us. I had Judie and Carole already. And then when war started, I was big, you know?

IRITANI: Big.

TANAKA: Yes. So, everybody think I'm going to have a twin. That time that was boy.

IRITANI: And so they went into camp.

TANAKA: Yes, went to Walerga.

IRITANI: Walerga. And then you had your baby. And where did you have your baby?

TANAKA: Same place.

IRITANI: Didn't she have to go into camp, too?

TANAKA: Yes. She had to go to camp, too, but she's still in Sacramento.

IRITANI: Oh, she's still here?

TANAKA: A lot of people was staying, they don't go same time.

IRITANI: Not everybody.

TANAKA: Not everybody. So, good thing, she's still in town. I stay at the hotel. Everybody close the business and everything. So, I was stay in the hotel and I had a baby. So, I can't go right away.
[inaudible] My husband took two girls to the Walerga and then good thing my brother-in-law still in Sacramento, he hired a *hakujin* guy to ask him to take us to the Walerga camp.

IRITANI: Well, before you went into Walerga camp, then you were staying in a hotel, by yourselves.

TANAKA: Yes. Me and the baby.

IRITANI: And you took a couple of weeks rest before you went into camp. And all the storing and selling things your husband took care of all that before he left for camp then? Left for Walerga? So, you didn't have to do any of that before you left.

TANAKA: I didn't even worry about it. I didn't know what's going on.

IRITANI: Oh, really?

TANAKA: I'm still young.

IRITANI: But you take care of the two little girls and yourself.

TANAKA: He took the two girls.

IRITANI: No, but, before that. He had to sell some of your things.

[End Tape 2. Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

IRITANI: This is Tape 3, Side A, and we were talking with you about the time that you went into Walerga. But before that, when war began, when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, do you remember what your reaction was, what you thought at that time, how you felt? Do you remember that time? Of course, you were busy with two little babies.

TANAKA: Yes, I had two little children. I don't feel nothing. . .

IRITANI: Nothing special?

TANAKA: Nothing special. Oh, no, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. I didn't even know where is Pearl Harbor is. I was so shocked. You know Japan.

IRITANI: Were you taking some Japanese newspaper? Which one were you taking? Nichi Bei?

TANAKA: Oh, I think Nichi Bei.

IRITANI: And did you already have a telephone in your home?

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: So, you could get information from other people.

TANAKA: Oh, yes.

IRITANI: Talk about when they started to take the Japanese into the camps. So, you could read about it and hear about that. So, you already knew about it. Some people didn't get that much information.

TANAKA: Oh-h. I already knew. I don't know why. Maybe a lot of people talking about it or something.

IRITANI: And, when you went into Walerga, you mentioned the fact that your husband worked in the mess hall. Was he a cook or?

TANAKA: Yes, cook.

IRITANI: He was a cook. [inaudible] He does a lot of things. So, you stayed in your barrack most of the time.

TANAKA: Most of the time, because I have a just born, third one, altogether three [inaudible], so I don't want to go to the mess hall and eat. He's the cook, so he's going to bring me, three times a day, breakfast, lunch, dinner, he bring me food.

IRITANI: Do you remember when you were then transferred over to Tule Lake?

TANAKA: Oh, I think we stayed in Walerga not too long. Less than one year, I think.

IRITANI: Yes, I'm sure.

TANAKA: When order come, then, see, I don't even speak English those day, you know? So, when my husband say so and so, I don't know what day, how we gotta move Tule Lake. I don't know anything.

- IRITANI: You just followed [inaudible] the direction. In Tule Lake, do you remember the different things that you did? Before you left for Amache, did you get involved in anything in Tule Lake?
- TANAKA: Oh, Tule Lake? No. First Walerga. And short time over there. And my daughter Judie she always gets sick and when she starts coughing and then she gets fever. So I talked to doctor.
- IRITANI: In Tule Lake?
- TANAKA: After moved to Tule Lake. "Doctor, I think you should do something for my daughter, because she got cold and everything she get fever and." So, doctor suggest, "How about operation, tonsil operation." "Yes, I want her to be strong, "
- IRITANI: So that was at the Tule Lake hospital. Were you in any other classes, or anything?
- TANAKA: Yes. I went to sewing school.
- IRITANI: In Tule Lake?
- TANAKA: Yes. That helped me a lot. I could even make a pattern. Me and my friend. We were friends since before the war. Girl friend. Her husband, he was work in the S. P. [Southern Pacific] depot, engineer. Before.
- IRITANI: Here? Here in Sacramento?
- TANAKA: Here in Sacramento. So, we're friend. Next door. They living next door. So, her and me, we go to the sewing school. So he made me a square. I'm still using it.
- IRITANI: The one that he made in Tule Lake? Very good.
- TANAKA: We've been friends for many, many years.

- IRITANI: Your husband, was he also working in the mess hall in Tule Lake, too?
- TANAKA: Yes.
- IRITANI: I know everybody had to have a job.
- TANAKA: Oh, yes. Nineteen dollar or sixteen dollar a month, huh?
- IRITANI: What did he get?
- TANAKA: I think, let's see. I don't know. I don't remember.
- IRITANI: You don't remember the money came in?
- TANAKA: No, no. We don't have to worry about money so.
- IRITANI: He took care of it. He took care of that kind of thing, anyway.
- TANAKA: We took all the children to the mess hall.
- IRITANI: There, you did? You didn't just stay in your room?
- TANAKA: No. Tule Lake, the youngest one was still not walk. So, I carried him and two of them. Two, and three or four [years old]. So went to mess hall.
- IRITANI: Is there anything else that you remember you did or saw in Tule Lake?
- TANAKA: Tule Lake. I don't know why, I went to dance. One time we on a stage. I like dancing. Not alone.
- IRITANI: Oh, odori
- TANAKA: Not alone. Uh-huh. *Odori, neh?* [dance, right?] Japan *no*. And then my husband told me, my youngest son was crying. "Oh, see mama, mama." Maybe something wrong with me. I was on the stage and dancing in front of the people. Not only

me, but groups. So, he cried. "Oh, ma!" He can't understand, you know. So little.

IRITANI: Was that more classical dancing? Or more obon dancing?

TANAKA: Oh, classical dancing, I think, but group dance.

IRITANI: But, you were taking a lesson there. Very good. How about your kimono there?

TANAKA: I don't know how, but we had a kimono.

IRITANI: Maybe somebody had brought in a lot of kimonos.

TANAKA: I think so, yes, yes. And one issei [immigrant from Japan] *no* missus, she played the *shamisen* [a stringed instrument]. I always go there and talk to her. And I think she teach us dance. Some kind of special occasion we did a dance or singing or something.

IRITANI: Is there any other thing that happened in Tule Lake that you remember?

TANAKA: [Sigh] Like I say, Judie was so sick all time.

IRITANI: But, she was strong because of . . .

TANAKA: Since then she never get sick. So, I was so happy for that. Somebody was making a tofu or something. I wonder how they get the beans.

IRITANI: Somehow, they knew where to get it.

TANAKA: Maybe I shouldn't say that. That's secret.

IRITANI: That's all right. No, no. I've seen that in other books. And then you had that questionnaire.

TANAKA: Oh, yes.

IRITANI: Do you remember that time? The discussion in your block about the questionnaire?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. We gotta go into the office, some office and. . .

IRITANI: Your husband was born here, so he was a nisei.

TANAKA: I'm nisei, too.

IRITANI: Yes. But, he was a man who was a nisei. Did they give him a different questionnaire than you got? Do you remember that? Or did he get the same questionnaire that you got?

TANAKA: I think it's the same.

IRITANI: It was the same?

TANAKA: I think so.

IRITANI: Maybe it was just for the younger men. Because by that time he was already in his thirties. When you married him, you said he was twenty six, and by now Judie is four or five, so he was like thirty one or so. So, maybe he didn't get that one that the young men got. They got one that asked about becoming soldiers in the American Army.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. They drafted.

IRITANI: No, this is not just the draft.

TANAKA: Volunteer?

IRITANI: Just saying, "Are you willing?" Yes or no. And so, you and your husband had to fill out one of those questionnaires in your block manager's office?

TANAKA: No, special office.

IRITANI: In administration. Administration office.

TANAKA: And then they also got that "Yes or No". We signed the yes and no.

IRITANI: So, your form was in Japanese?

TANAKA: No, that was English. Somebody had to translate to us, I think. I don't remember for sure, but we sign, yes and no. That's for sure.

IRITANI: So, how did you both answer? You both answered, "Yes, Yes" to the two questions, 27 and 28? And that's why you went to Amache.

TANAKA: Right, right.

IRITANI: Or that's why you did not stay in Tule Lake. And when, do you remember, about when you moved to Amache? To Amache camp? About when that was? It was 1943, probably. Was it already summer time, or. . .

TANAKA: Gee, I don't remember for sure. Just I remember the truck come out, get on the truck, then take us to the train depot. Then we get on the train, and how long to get to Colorado? I don't remember. They give us a, see I have a little kids, so they give us a pullman.

IRITANI: Oh-h. Beds. Very good.

TANAKA: So, we could sleep. Lay down right there. I thought that was really good service.

IRITANI: Nice.

TANAKA: Yes, very nice.

IRITANI: How about the food? You had many days to go to Amache.

TANAKA: It was good!

IRITANI: It was good.

TANAKA: Yes, mostly my Block 9-K, living there. 9-K. Close to the hospital. And most of the people from Los Angeles. Not too many from Sacramento. We are in the Los Angeles group. But all Japanese and everybody nice. And then my children are a little grown up, so it wasn't too hard to go to mess hall. So, I take them to the mess hall. Bad winter, they have snow. Even cover the door, so I have to. . .

IRITANI: Is this for Tule Lake or Amache?

TANAKA: Amache, I'm talking about. In wintertime, a lot of snow and when I open the door, wow! snow there, see?

IRITANI: You had to shovel it away.

TANAKA: Yes. I have to do it myself. Sometimes Japanese neighbor help us. Then my husband was already out. Chicago.

IRITANI: Did he go into Walerga? Not Walerga, I mean Amache? Oh, he went into Amache and then he left.

TANAKA: Not right away. He was stayed there one year, I think. Or a half year.

IRITANI: And then he left.

TANAKA: Yes. So, I have to carry the tray to go get the food in wintertime. And bring home and feed the kids.

IRITANI: So, you still brought everything back to the room to eat with the children, at that time. It was too cold to go out.

TANAKA: That's why kinda hard to take them. The cold weather and the

snow. I can't take them to the mess hall. That's why I take the tray to the mess hall and get the, I eat over there and get the food to my children

IRITANI: Somebody else stayed with your children? Or they stayed by themselves?

TANAKA: No, stayed by selves. I think Judie take care of the. . .

IRITANI: . . . the little ones.

TANAKA: I don't have to worry about it. Japanese next door is old lady. Those days I was young. Next door lady was from Los Angeles. She's so nice, and I think she goes to the mess hall and eat, come back. I was so young, so I don't think I have a hard time, those days. Now, when I thinking, "Oh, how I did it?"

IRITANI: How did I do that?

TANAKA: I have a one picture.

IRITANI: We'll look for it. So, the time you were in Amache, did you do some, take some more classes there, too?

TANAKA: When I went to the Amache, funny thing, I want to do all kind of thing. My husband was out [in Chicago], so I order him, chenille.

IRITANI: Oh, that's where you did your chenille?

TANAKA: Yes. I make a flower with the chenille. And some funeral, see no flower, so they buy from me. Especially my good friend from Hawaii, he was a reverend. He was in other camp, and then he come to the Amache camp, same as us. I think his wife passed away, I think she was stay in Hawaii still. He's from Hawaii, but

he's a reverend. He lived all by himself and wife passed away, I made a flower with chenille and then funeral, they used that. I remember that.

IRITANI: And then you sold some of those, too?

TANAKA: Yes.

IRITANI: So, you were a business woman, too.

TANAKA: I put it in a plastic bag and then I sold a few. I want to do something. I like to make something.

IRITANI: You are very creative. Very good.

TANAKA: Good thing my husband's out, so buy it and send to me. He send me a lot of candy for my children. Too much, so I give it away. Give it away when they have a little kids.

IRITANI: The work that your husband did in Chicago, do you remember what that was?

TANAKA: I don't know. He didn't tell me. He said he was working in a hotel changing sheets and this and that. I don't know, really.

IRITANI: As long as they had a job, they could leave.

TANAKA: Those days, if you stay in the camp, they're going to draft. That kind of thing everybody talking about. Men folks get out. I don't know it's true or not.

IRITANI: Well, they could be drafted after they get out, too. If they're on the list of whatever selective service group, they could be drafted after they get out.

TANAKA: That's not a right. Because they put us in a camp, it's a jail, right? Then how come they draft people from jail? They could do it, huh?

IRITANI: That's what happened. There are some people, some men, who resisted the draft, and they were jailed, in jails. In prisons.

TANAKA: Oh, yes? When they stay in the camp they gonna draft, so they get out. I think men folks can't stand it, so they get out. They want to do something.

IRITANI: That's true. A lot of young people, young men and women, left camp when they could. Some people went to go to college, some people, just to go to work, and then they called their families out. So, you never went to Chicago?

TANAKA: No, I never been there.

IRITANI: So, after the war was over in 1945, August, 1945, and you were still in Amache, and where did you go from Amache when they said everybody has to leave?

TANAKA: Oh, come right back to Sacramento. Staying in Buddhist Church. See, no place to stay, so Buddhist Church opened. So, we were living in Buddhist Church.

IRITANI: So, your husband came back to Amache to get you and the family. And then you came back to Sacramento and stayed in the Buddhist Church hostel.

TANAKA: Buddhist Church's *kaikan* [an assembly hall].

IRITANI: Kaikan. The big building.

TANAKA: They give us a blanket. Put the blanket on the floor. Sleeping there.

IRITANI: On the floor.

TANAKA: And then later on they give us a cot. Bed. So a little better and we cooking a small kitchen for many, many people. Take turn and cook and feed them.

IRITANI: Did you have to help with the cooking then?

TANAKA: I had to cook my family.

IRITANI: You had to cook for your own family. So everyone took care of their own families. Did your husband find work right away?

TANAKA: Ah-h. Yes. I don't know how late, but men can't stand it. I had a children so. Anywhere I go, I have a children with me.

IRITANI: You have the children.

TANAKA: So I don't think it too hard. But, menfolks can't stand it. Most of men work in a farm. My husband was working in a tomato ranch. He could get the money, right? So, that's all I know. And then my good friend they get out from Buddhist Church, they don't want that kind of life so, they get out and they started a rooming house. So, one day he came to us, I have a room, so, why don't you come to my place. So, I say, "Oh, boy!" So, right away move into the rooming house.

IRITANI: So, you didn't stay at the Buddhist Church too long?

TANAKA: Good thing.

- IRITANI: It was a good thing that they were able to make a hostel. But, you were also able to get out and keep your family together, and your husband was working. Very good. And after you moved into that rooming house, were you there very long? Or did you make other arrangements?
- TANAKA: Let's see. How long we stay there. My children was going to school. Youngest one wasn't go, yet. Only about five years old something. My husband was working at theater again.
- IRITANI: At what point did he start working for the state?
- TANAKA: Not yet. Those days I think he was working at movie theater. Projector.
- IRITANI: When he did begin working for the state, when was that, and what job did he have. You mentioned he was a machinist.
- TANAKA: He didn't work for the state. He worked for government.
- IRITANI: Oh. Federal government. Oh-h.
- TANAKA: He was working at McClellan [Air Force Base].
- IRITANI: Oh, McClellan. All right.
- TANAKA: For many year, until he retire. He had a medical retirement. He got nerve trouble.
- IRITANI: Pinched nerve?
- TANAKA: From here to here to. . .
- IRITANI: From his hands to his arms to his neck.
- TANAKA: So, he can't write the report. So he was, what they call, it's a medical retirement.

- IRITANI: Right. About how old was he then? What year?
- TANAKA: I don't know. Pretty old by then
- IRITANI: By then. In his fifties, maybe?
- TANAKA: No, more than that.
- IRITANI: Already in his sixties? Oh, so he was near retirement age anyway.
- TANAKA: Oh, yes. Three more years or something like that.
- IRITANI: Oh, I see. Okay. And did you work at any time outside of your home?
- TANAKA: Ah, I worked for domestic work for how many year. Seven year, I think. Half a day.
- IRITANI: While the children were in school?
- TANAKA: Yes, that's it. Children was in school.
- IRITANI: So, you got out and you were still creative? Making things, Sewing things.
- TANAKA: I was still making things. One of my granddaughter same way. She likes to sew, she likes to create this and that.
- IRITANI: Well, I'm going to bring you up to now. Okay, we know we have a limited time here. I want to know about *Senryu*.
- TANAKA: Oh, that's the next time.
- IRITANI: No, I think we could end it right here if we can quickly talk about that. How long have you been writing this poetry? I understand it's like *Haiku*, excepting that *Senryu*, you don't have a have [or refer to] a season. You still have the 5-7-5 verse.

[The poem had three lines with syllables numbering 5-7-5.] And yours is always written in Japanese, I would assume. When did you start doing that?

TANAKA: Exactly, I don't know, but, about thirty years?

IRITANI: Oh-h-h.

TANAKA: Long time.

IRITANI: 1970s.

TANAKA: Used to be, all the issei people doing it. I'm the youngest one. One day, I don't know why I'm going to the class. Get into the

class. And they welcome me. I'm the youngest one. In Japan, my father writing poetry.

IRITANI: He was a poet.

TANAKA: So, maybe I got it from him. So, I don't know why, I went to class one day. And then since then, I'm a member. Busy time I didn't go, but I don't know when I started. You don't have to do it all the time, you know.

IRITANI: There is a competition? Contest?

TANAKA: Yes. contest. That's why I. . .

IRITANI: Every year?

TANAKA: Every new year. Sometime they have a big contest. Not only Sacramento. Sacramento and out of town, too. San Francisco group, all over. All over the world. Some Brazil.

IRITANI: Where did you send your poem? Do you send it to Japan or San Francisco?

TANAKA: No, over here. Our group is Sacramento. Go to one place and then we have a contest that day.

IRITANI: Everybody brings their poems to this meeting on New Year's Day.

TANAKA: That's a special. Every month we have a poem.

IRITANI: Every month?

TANAKA: Every month. Once a month we have a poem class. So we go to the friend's house and we have a contest there. Which one is good. And then we made a book. In Sacramento, in San

Francisco, and all over. Anybody could get in. You don't have to be there everytime.

IRITANI: Are there people who write Senryu poem in English, too?

TANAKA: All Japanese.

IRITANI: But, it's possible to write. . . just like some people write Haiku in English. As long as they get the syllables. And they get the season into the poem. So, Senryu, could really be in English, too. But, your contest is strictly for Japanese language Senryu.

TANAKA: I could tell you later, but my daughter, she's living New York, She's a sansei, she wrote the English poem and sent to the San Francisco and somebody translate to Japanese. Her Senryu in a magazine.

IRITANI: Oh, very good. She's taking after you. I want to complete your story right here. Okay. You have three children. And one child

lives in New York. Judie is here and she has three children of her own?

TANAKA: Judie. Judie has six children. Son living here.

IRITANI: And your son lives here, Rory. Right? And does he have children, also?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. Seven.

IRITANI: He has seven. Did Carole have children, too?

TANAKA: Carole? She have three children. One girl, two boys.

IRITANI: Oh boy. You have a lot of grandchildren.

TANAKA: Oh, yes. I have a sixteen grandchildren.

IRITANI: And how may great grandchildren?

TANAKA: Ten.

IRITANI: Ten great grandchildren.

TANAKA: And the great, great grandchildren. One of them.

IRITANI: One, oh my.

TANAKA: Five generation. [inaudible], third, fourth, fifth, sixth.

IRITANI: My goodness. Most of them are still here in the Sacramento area?

TANAKA: Yes. Just my second girl, Carole, family living in New York.

IRITANI: Wow, they're all around here.

TANAKA: Others. Everybody here.

IRITANI: No wonder you can get together and have eighty people.

TANAKA: You should see the New Year's Day.

IRITANI: That's what I'm saying. You were talking about having eighty people at Cheryl's place.

TANAKA: Used to be I have a New Year party here. It won't fit anymore.

IRITANI: That's right.

TANAKA: That's why move to my daughter's place, but their house getting small, so now Cheryl's place. She has a big house. So we're going to New Year's Day. We all go to the Cheryl's house.

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[End of Session 3]

[Session 4, April 9, 2004]

[Tape 3, Side B]

IRITANI: Today's date is April 9, 2004, and I am Joanne Iritani and continuing this Session 4 to interview Ai Tanaka. In the last session, I failed to watch my light [on the tape recorder] go off, and so I did not realize that the tape had completed it around. And many of the things that we talked about was cut off. And so, I want to continue this session in order to pick up some of that information. So, we will begin, first of all with the evacuation time. You were living in town and you mentioned moving after they told you about the curfew.

TANAKA: Supposed to be eight o'clock. By eight o'clock you can't go out. Stay in.

IRITANI: Eight o'clock at night.

TANAKA: That's right. My husband works movie theater.

IRITANI: He was the projector operator. So he has to go to work.

TANAKA: He has to go to work night time. He was thinking and he had an idea. The movie theater, is a same building, it used to be a restaurant. But, they already went to the camp. So, nobody lived there. so we move in there. so, my husband go work without go outside.

- IRITANI: So, was that a theater showing Japanese movies?
- TANAKA: No. It's a American movie.
- IRITANI: American movies.
- TANAKA: It was no problem. He couldn't go outside. Same building.
- IRITANI: So, you were able to take your two children there and it made it much easier for you because you had space to watch them and not worry about whether your husband could go to work.
- TANAKA: That's right.
- IRITANI: Very good. So, how long do you think you were there in that?
- TANAKA: Only short time. And I almost had. . .
- IRITANI: Your baby.
- TANAKA: Yes. My baby's due. So, anyway, my husband take two girls to the camp first.
- IRITANI: And he went, do you think it was already May? In the month of May that he went?
- TANAKA: I don't remember exactly, but. . .
- IRITANI: When was your boy born?
- TANAKA: My boy born in April 16.
- IRITANI: Oh, so, it was before May. It was still March.
- TANAKA: I just staying in town for ten days or something with my baby.
- IRITANI: How many days was your husband gone before you had your baby? Do you remember that? Not too long, I guess.
- TANAKA: Not too long. As I say ten days? Ten days later my brother-in-law. . . good thing my brother-in-law in town.
- IRITANI: He didn't have to go because he lived in a different section?

- TANAKA: I think so. I don't know exactly, but, anyway he's still in town, so he look for the driver and take me to the camp. Me and the baby. So, the nice gentleman he found me and he drove me to the Walerga camp.
- IRITANI: And when did your brother-in-law, when did his family leave?
- TANAKA: He wasn't married at that time. So, he staying in Sacramento and maybe later, I don't know when he went in to the camp.
- IRITANI: He also went into Walerga?
- TANAKA: I think so, yes. That time, I just thinking about myself, so, you know. I can't worry about him.
- IRITANI: You were taking care of being pregnant and having a baby.
- TANAKA: Yes. A good thing what they call *sambasan*.
- IRITANI: Yes. The midwife.
- TANAKA: The midwife still in town. Good thing. So, I took a taxi and go to the midwife. Had a boy. My boy name's Rory Junichi Tanaka.
- IRITANI: Rory what?
- TANAKA: Junichi. One. He's a sixty two, now.
- IRITANI: I wanted also to have you tell me again, when did your husband die, and he was already retired from McClellan, you said?
- TANAKA: He die, 1991, August 30.
- IRITANI: August 30?
- TANAKA: At Mercy Hospital.
- IRITANI: Was he quite ill?
- TANAKA: He had a heart problem. He was going to doctor, but, that day, one morning he called me early in the morning. "What's

wrong, Dad?" He said to me, "Over here, hurry." So, I say, "Oh, no." I always read the doctor's health book, or what they call. . .

IRITANI: Magazine? In Japanese.

TANAKA: Yes. Just because I have three children. So, I was reading those books, so I know that. When my husband says, "Right here hurts." "Oh, no." He's having a heart attack. So, I called the doctor right away. Good thing doctor was in the hospital. He's checking his patients, I think. I was lucky. Seven o'clock, maybe six thirty in the morning. So doctor told me, "That's a heart attack so you better hurry up and call the ambulance. Take him to the hospital. So, I take him to the hospital. He staying two day in the hospital. Second day, he passed away. Easily. He sleep like this and he gone. All the family near and my children and grandchildren and a few friends. Everybody watching him. And I watch the blood pressure machine coming down, down, down, down.

IRITANI: And just stopped.

TANAKA: I thought, "Oh, no, please."

IRITANI: But, he passed away nice and easy.

TANAKA: Nice and easy. Yes.

IRITANI: Very, very good way to go.

TANAKA: Best way to go.

IRITANI: Best way. Yes. And you continued to live in this house. When did you buy this house?

TANAKA: I don't know exactly date, I already forty years?

- IRITANI: Forty years.
- TANAKA: I think so.
- IRITANI: Very nice.
- TANAKA: Yes, and neighbors are nice, just like I told you.
- IRITANI: And I must comment on your lovely new flower arrangements.
They're both beautiful.
- TANAKA: Thank you very much. I like to do.
- IRITANI: One more thing I wanted to ask about your Senryu classes.
You're still going to them?
- TANAKA: Yes. I've been in Senryu group, how many years? Twenty
years? More than twenty years.
- IRITANI: So, somebody picks you up?
- TANAKA: Yes. Before, my husband was working mostly he's out of town,
so. . .
- IRITANI: So, other people picked you up. You never did really learn to
drive, I remember.
- TANAKA: No, I was so scared to drive. I don't want to hurt other people.
That's what I thinking. You know.
- IRITANI: You're still going to Senryu classes, now even? When you're at
home, and you're working on your futon, and you're working
on your flower arrangement, and then do you just sit down
sometimes to say I'm going to write the poems now?
- TANAKA: Yes. Most of the time, I'm doing something in the house,
cleaning and changing flower arrangement and. . .
- IRITANI: Cooking.

- TANAKA: Cooking. I still cooking once a week for family.
- IRITANI: And are you thinking of different poems as the day goes on?
- TANAKA: Yes. They give us a title. Just like title is a snow, or tomorrow. . .
- IRITANI: So what is the title you're working on right now? Are you working on one?
- TANAKA: Right now. Let's see. I have a note over there.
- IRITANI: If you have forgotten, it's okay. You don't have to bring it.
- TANAKA: Okay.
- IRITANI: They give you a subject each time.
- TANAKA: They give us two title. I have to make two poem each. So, I gotta make four poem, plus we call it *datsuei*. Means 'anything'.
- IRITANI: Datsue?
- TANAKA: Datsuei. Anything. No title. [Mrs. Tanaka wrote it in Chinese characters.]
- IRITANI: I cannot read that. I'm one of these nisei who, I could read *watakushi, ikimasu*. That's about it.
- TANAKA: Some English poem in there, I want to show you. Because my daughter in New York is making a poem, too. Because I thought she should do something. She always laying down in hospital bed, so she real sharp, you know. So, I suggest, "You want to make a poem?" And she say, "Yes. I could do that." And then her poem in here. So, I was going to show you the. . . . It get too old. [Mrs. Tanaka shared two booklets of poems.]
- IRITANI: So, this comes out with the winners' poems? These booklets?

- TANAKA: Every month from San Francisco. Yes, Sacramento and San Francisco together. So, a lotta people, you know? Every new year we took a picture. Oh, I don't have any picture here.
- IRITANI: That's okay. So, everybody's poems that they submitted is in here? Everybody's poems that they made is in here?
- TANAKA: Yes.
- IRITANI: Real nice.
- TANAKA: And then, which one is good and best.
- IRITANI: And then from this, the judges choose the best poems, out of here?
- TANAKA: Every month, once a month we have a get together, the poem day. And then we're going to take the poem to the class, okay? And then two gentlemen, we made a two titles, so we need a two people to judge the poems. So, most of the time, head man going to mark which is good, and those things. So, it's very. . . I like it very much. I learn, you know. Everybody talking about poems, not other things. The group people's nice. That's why I go every time.
- IRITANI: And so, during the day, while you're just working on your futon, you might think of that subject. Maybe it was snow. And maybe you might think, "Oh, maybe I could say it this way." Or change it in your head as you're doing something else.
- TANAKA: Even while I'm cooking, maybe this is good. When I went to bed, I thinking, "Oh, maybe this is nice." I write it down, but next morning when I look, "Oh, no." Can't even read.

[Laughter]

IRITANI: Very good.

TANAKA: Everybody say that. Poem say same thing.

IRITANI: When you do it in bed, big ideas. . .

TANAKA: This is a good poem, that's why I write it down, and then when I woke up the morning, "Oh, no. What did I write? I can't even read.

IRITANI: Very good. And the other thing I wanted to know about is your family that you left in Japan. When did you first go back to see them? Do you remember what year?

TANAKA: I came here in 1937. April I left Japan, and twenty year later, first time I went back to the Japan.

IRITANI: So, 1957 you went back. That's twenty years.

TANAKA: Yes, twenty years later. because my children grown up, and the last one went into the army, so I don't have any. The oldest one's married, the second one not married. She was working in a state. Anyway children gone.

IRITANI: They were away from home now. Independent.

TANAKA: That's why I did, I should go see my mother. My father was passed away, long time ago.

IRITANI: Very long ago after the war.

TANAKA: After I came here, then three year later, he passed away.

IRITANI: Oh, 1940.

TANAKA: So, I have to go see my mother. This is a good chance to go. So, I went and stayed there three months.

IRITANI: Did you fly over, or did you take the ship?

TANAKA: I fly over. First plane go to the Japan?

IRITANI: Oh, really?

TANAKA: I wasn't scared at all. Three, eight, hour. . . anyway eighteen hour to get there, because from San Francisco to Hawaii, Hawaii to Guam, Guam to Japan. Each one of them six hour to Hawaii, six hour to Guam, Guam to Japan is six hour. Eighteen hour. But, I was young I was only forty, so I not get tired or anything. I just thinking about my mother and brother and sister. I don't get tired at all. And I saw my mother and she was so-o-o happy. I think she worry about me, how many years. Every day.

IRITANI: Yes. She's a mother. Mothers do worry. And at that time, your sisters and brothers, Midori was still there? And she was already married and had children? And your younger brothers and sisters already had children, also?

TANAKA: Yes. I think all of them married at that time.

IRITANI: So, you met your new nieces and nephews for the first time. For you, of course, the language probably didn't change that much, talking to your mother and sister. But, did you find the language of the younger people very different for you?

TANAKA: No, I don't think so. Those days, I didn't speak too much English, and then depend all Japanese. They speak Japanese, so I don't [inaudible] too much. So when I go back to Japan, no, nothing change. Everybody speaking Japanese same like me, so, no problem. I don't think anything change.

- IRITANI: Not too much change in the dialect, or the way, new way to talk. The younger people. And then, how many more times did you go back.
- TANAKA: Let's see, I think I went back to Japan altogether four times.
- IRITANI: Four times. And then you mentioned that your sister came over here. Was she the only one?
- TANAKA: Yes, because she born here. My sister's name Midori. She born here, same place.
- IRITANI: And was able to get the birth certificate from Placer County, too? Or did she prove that she was an American citizen?
- TANAKA: She was American citizen, but I think everybody could come here, that time, after the war. Just visit.
- IRITANI: So that's really what she was doing, just visiting.
- TANAKA: She wants to same as me, she want to see Loomis, where she born.
- IRITANI: Did your mother ever come back.
- TANAKA: No.
- IRITANI: Is she still living? She's not still living is she?
- TANAKA: No, she passed away after I, first I visit her. I stayed there three months, October to January. January seven I came back to the United States. And then after that, April, she passed away.
- IRITANI: Oh, she died. Very good that you were able to go.
- TANAKA: Yes, so twenty years she's been waiting for me. To come. I was reading old letter. I keep every one of them.
- IRITANI: So, have you visited Japan since your mother died?

- TANAKA: No, I didn't go back to. . . No, haven't.
- IRITANI: And none of your children have visited Japan with you, then?
- TANAKA: No, not my children, but my grandson went to the, he was in the army, navy. He was in Japan.
- IRITANI: He was in the United States military and assigned to Japan.
- TANAKA: Just stop over Japan. I don't know where he go. Maybe Yokota. They have an airport. I mean American base there, Yokota.
- IRITANI: So you have not gone back to Japan with your children just to visit your sister, or your brothers and sisters and your nieces and nephews with the family?
- TANAKA: I went to, '96.
- IRITANI: That was your last time?
- TANAKA: That's right, yes. I visit, I stay at my sister's place and then. . .
- IRITANI: And she still lives around Beppu?
- TANAKA: She was living in Beppu, but she passed away.
- IRITANI: But, not too long ago?
- TANAKA: Not too long ago, no. I visit '96, so maybe. . .
- IRITANI: And she died after that. It wasn't too long ago. So, at this point right now, you don't think you'll be going back to Japan again?
- TANAKA: Well, I just go back Japan and one thing I want to visit my mother and father's, sister's, brother's grave.
- IRITANI: Yes, *ohakamaeri*.
- TANAKA: *Ohakamaeri*. Another thing is, they have an *onsen* you know. Hot spring town. I want to get in the *onsen*. Oh, that's so feel

good! It's a natural, you know? So, all over in Beppu, they have a steam on it. So I want to do.

IRITANI: You want to do that one more time.

TANAKA: One more time, yes.

IRITANI: Get your family together and say, "Let's go!" "Get your passports!"

TANAKA: I'm too old so. . .

IRITANI: No, no, no. No, you're not. You're able to walk. My brother went when he had to use a wheel chair. And my niece made all the arrangements with that wheelchair. So, it's not impossible. Okay.

TANAKA: Maybe I'll go with Cheryl.

IRITANI: Get people together and say, "Let's go."

TANAKA: That's nice.

IRITANI: What other things do you really want to do still? You say you're getting older, but there are still things that your mind is saying, "I want to do." What are they?

TANAKA: I want to do a lot of thing. I like to sew. I still want to make a comforter, and then I still want to do the flower arranging. This one never I'm going to stop. Never stop.

IRITANI: Have you ever taught your granddaughters? Show them how to do flower arrangements.

TANAKA: They like it.

IRITANI: But, have they learned how to?

TANAKA: They like to do.

IRITANI: Just have a little workshop, right here.

TANAKA: Yes. Someday do, huh? That's maybe a lot of fun. I want them to learn, too. That's something, you know? They have an earth, man. No, no, heaven, man, earth. That's a foundation. That's it. I want them to learn that.

IRITANI: Just say, "Okay, come over." You probably have a lot of vases?

TANAKA: Oh, yes. A lot of them in the garage.

IRITANI: So, they have to learn from you. Okay? So, was there any other thing you still really want to do? Go someplace, or to do?

TANAKA: I don't drive, so I depend on my children and my grandchildren. When I want to go, I ask them. Now, Mondays grocery shopping. My son gonna take me to the grocery shopping. when I have a doctor's appointment, he take me Monday. So, Fridays my granddaughter Joyce come over and take me shopping. And same thing when I have a doctor's appointment. Oh, yes. Thursday night is a dinner night. I make the dinner for family. Anybody could come, but usually my daughter and son-in-law and granddaughter and great grandson. My hobbies are flower arranging, sewing, cooking. Those things.

IRITANI: And you continue to do it.

TANAKA: Continue to do it, as long as I live. i go to beauty shop

IRITANI: And I hope that is a very long time, still. People are living into their one hundreds, you know.

TANAKA: No, no, no. I don't want to live that long.

IRITANI: Okay, I think at this point we can just say, we can close this session, Session four, and I really thank you very, very much.

TANAKA: Thank you very much for coming.

IRITANI: I have enjoyed listening to your life story.

TANAKA: Thank you. I have nothing special.

IRITANI: No, you are. You are. Very good. Thank you.

TANAKA: I like my family. Special grand children, great grand children. I have a five generation.

IRITANI: Yes, I know, and we want to use that photograph. I am going to close it at this point and say thank you.

TANAKA: Thank you very much.

[End of interview.]

NAMES LIST

NAME	IDENTIFICATION	SOURCE OF VERIFICATION	PAGE INTRODUCED
Cheryl Miles	Granddaughter of Ai Tanaka	Ai Tanaka	1
Masaki Higashi	Father	"	2
Kameo Koyama	Mother	"	2
Midori	Sister	"	3
Yuriko	Sister	"	4
Kenichi	Brother	"	4
Ryuichi	Brother	"	4
Seimo	Brother	"	4
Chitose	Sister	"	4
John Mark	Owner of land in Sacramento	"	6
Mr. Nakashima	Friend of parents	"	7
Mitsuo Tanaka	Husband	"	8
Toshiye	Husband's sister	"	8
Tadao	Husband's brother	"	8
Judie	Daughter	"	10
Carole	Daughter	"	10
Rory	Son	"	10
Mrs. Kataoka	Sewing teacher in Amache, CO	"	14
Mr. Fujioka	Teacher of flower arrangement	"	15
Marie Summers	Founding member and first president of Ikebana International	"	15
Molly Kimura	Founding member and first vice president of Ikebana International	"	15
Grace Sugiyama	Founding member and secretary of Ikebana International	"	15
Mrs. Tanabe	Japanese dance teacher	"	21

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